

Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served to children in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, and at-risk afterschool care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) CACFP. Foods served in reimbursable meals and snacks must meet the CACFP meal patterns. For information on the CACFP meal patterns and crediting foods for children, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpages.



Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that cannot credit in the USDA's meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs. They include foods and beverages in amounts too small to credit (i.e., less than the minimum creditable amount), and foods and beverages that do not belong to the meal pattern components. Examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. The chart on page 2 lists additional examples of noncreditable foods for CACFP child care programs. This list is not all-inclusive.

CACFP facilities may serve noncreditable foods in addition to the meal components to add variety, help improve acceptability in the meal, and satisfy appetites. Some examples include maple syrup on pancakes, salad dressing on tossed greens, and condiments such as ketchup or mustard on sandwiches and other entrees.

To ensure that CACFP meals and snacks meet children's nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Menu planners should read labels, be aware of the ingredients in foods, and limit the frequency and amount of less nutritious choices.

The USDA's [CACFP Best Practices](#) recommends that CACFP menus avoid noncreditable foods that are sources of added sugars. Examples include sweet toppings (e.g., honey, jam, and syrup), mix-in ingredients sold with yogurt (e.g., honey, candy, and cookie pieces), and sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g., fruit drinks and sodas).



Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP

Note: CACFP funds cannot be used to purchase noncreditable foods, except for condiments served with creditable foods, and herbs and spices used to prepare and enhance the flavor of meals. For example, CACFP funds cannot be used to purchase grain-based desserts, gelatin, pudding, or canned cream soups.

Examples of noncreditable foods for CACFP child care programs

Almond milk ¹	Eggnog
Bacon and bacon bits	Egg whites
Banana chips	Frozen yogurt
Bread products that are not whole grain or enriched ²	Fruit drink, fruit beverage, powdered fruit drink mix
Breakfast cereals (ready-to-eat and cooked) with more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce ³	Fruit leathers (100 percent fruit)
Brownies ⁴	Fruit punch (not 100 percent juice)
Butter	Fruit snacks, e.g., fruit roll-ups, wrinkles, twists
Cake ⁴	Gelatin, regular and sugar free
Candy	Grain-based desserts, e.g., cookies, sweet piecrusts, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies ⁴
Candy-coated popcorn	Grains that are not whole or enriched ²
Caramel popcorn	Granola bars ⁴
Chocolate milk-based drinks, e.g., Yoo-Hoo	Honey ⁷
Cereal bars ⁴	Hot chocolate
Cinnamon buns or rolls ⁴	Ice cream
Coffee (regular, decaffeinated, and iced)	Ice cream novelties
Commercial processed products without a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS), e.g., entrees, smoothies, and breaded vegetables ⁵	Ice milk
Commercial smoothies that contain dietary or herbal supplements	Iced coffee
Condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, relish, and barbecue sauce	Iced tea
Cookies ⁴ , except animal crackers and graham crackers	Jam and jelly
Cranberry cocktail drink	Lemonade
Cream, half and half	Limeade
Cream cheese	Maple syrup
Cream soups, canned, e.g., cream of mushroom, cream of celery, and cream of broccoli	Margarine
Drinkable or squeezable yogurt ⁶	Marshmallows
	Mayonnaise
	Mustard
	Milk for age 1: Plain or flavored reduced fat (2%), plain or flavored low-fat (1%), and plain or flavored fat-free
	Milk for ages 2-5: Plain or flavored whole, plain or flavored reduced fat (2%), and flavored low-fat (1%)

Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP

Examples of noncreditable foods for CACFP child care programs, *continued*

Nondairy milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes ¹	Sour cream
Pastries ⁴	Soy milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes ¹
Pie ⁴	Sports drinks
Popsicles (not 100 percent juice)	Spreadable fruit
Potato chips	Sweet rolls ⁴
Probiotic dairy drinks	Syrup
Pudding	Tea, regular, herbal, and iced
Pudding pops	Toaster pastries ⁴
Puffs, fruit and vegetable	Tofu with less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) ⁸
Rice milk ¹	Water ⁹
Salad dressings	Yogurt or soy yogurt with more than more than 3.83 grams of total sugars per ounce ⁶
Scones, sweet, e.g., blueberry, raisin, or orange cranberry ⁴	
Sherbet	
Soda, regular and diet	
Soups, non-vegetable, canned, e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice	

- ¹ Milk substitutes must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in CACFP Child Care Programs](#).
- ² For guidance on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP](#) and [Whole Grain-rich Criteria for the CACFP](#).
- ³ For guidance on creditable cereals, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP](#).
- ⁴ These items are grain-based desserts and cannot credit in the CACFP meal patterns for children. For more information, refer to the USDA's handout, [Grain-Based Desserts in the CACFP](#).
- ⁵ Commercial products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in CACFP meals and snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the CACFP](#), [Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP](#); and visit the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Child Care Programs" section of the CSDE's CACFP webpage.
- ⁶ For guidance on crediting yogurt, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP](#).
- ⁷ Honey cannot be served to infants younger than age 1, including honey cooked in products such as honey graham crackers. Honey can contain botulism spores that can cause a serious type of foodborne illness in infants.
- ⁸ For guidance on crediting tofu, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP](#).
- ⁹ The HHFKA requires that CACFP facilities make drinking water available to children at no charge where meals are served during the meal service. For more information, review [USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#) and [USDA Memo CACFP 20-2016: Water Availability in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocumentationCACFP.pdf>

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/SpecDiet/MilkSubstitutesCACFP.pdf>

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_bestpractices.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditCerealsCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditCommercialMMACACFP.pdf>

Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#CommercialProducts>

Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditDeliCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditEnrichedGrainsCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Crediting Foods Prepared on Site in Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#PreparedonSite>

Crediting Juice in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditJuiceCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditSmoothiesCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Meal Patterns for Children (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Crediting_Summary_Charts_CACFP.pdf

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditTofuCACFP.pdf>

Noncreditable Foods for Child Care Programs in the CACFP

Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditWholeGrainsCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Yogurt in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditYogurtCACFP.pdf>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Grain-based Desserts in the CACFP – Handouts and webinars in English and Spanish (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grain-based-desserts-cacfp>

How to Identify Creditable Grains in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/IdentifyCreditableGrainsCACFP.pdf>

Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE):

<http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/GuideCACFPMealPatterns.pdf>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the CACFP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/WGR_Requirement_CACFP.pdf

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/ResourcesCACFPMealPattern.pdf>

Standardized Recipes in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

USDA Memo CACFP 08-2017: Questions and Answers on the Updated Meal Pattern Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/questions-and-answers-updated-meal-pattern-requirements-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

USDA Memo SP 08-2019, CACFP 02-2019 and SFSP 02-2019: Update of Food Crediting in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/update-food-crediting-child-nutrition-programs>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CNlabelCACFP.pdf>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/PFScacfp.pdf>

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/NoncreditableFoodsCACFP.pdf>.

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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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